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Conference Abstract

Outreach Strategies to Engage Citizen Scientists: Insights from the Biodiversity Heritage Library

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Abstract

How do you successfully engage volunteers in citizen science projects?

In recent years, citizen science has grown considerably in popularity, resulting in rapid increases in the number of citizen science and crowdsourcing projects and providing cost-effective means for scientists to gather more data over broader spatial ranges to tackle research questions in a wide variety of scientific, conservation, and environmental fields Bonney et al. 2016, Aceves-Bueno et al. 2017. While the proliferation of such projects has produced a growing abundance of citizen scientist-generated data and published research informed by citizen science methods Follett and Strezov 2015, this also means that volunteers have a greater number of projects competing for their time.

When faced with an increasingly-crowded landscape, how can you generate interest in a citizen science or crowdsourcing project and maintain contributions over the project's lifetime?

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) supports a variety of citizen science and crowdsourcing projects, from transcribing field notes to tagging scientific illustrations with taxonomic names on Flickr and enhancing data for 19th century periodicals through its Zooniverse-based *Science Gossip* project. Through a variety of outreach strategies including collaborative social media campaigns, partnerships with citizen science

communities, and interactive incentives, BHL has successfully engaged volunteers with diverse projects to enrich the library's data and increase discoverability of its collections.

This presentation will discuss outreach strategies for citizen science projects that BHL has undertaken to further support research initiatives with our content. In addition, the presentation will share lessons-learned and offer suggestions that attendees can apply to their own citizen science engagement efforts.

Keywords

citizen science, crowdsourcing, outreach, social media, engagement, citizen scientist

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